

**THE 2025-2026 SAN DIEGO COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY:
INVESTIGATION OF ADULT AND JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITIES**

SUMMARY

Over the past year, the San Diego County Sheriff's Office Detention Facilities and the San Diego County Probation Department Juvenile Detention Facilities have received significant local media attention. Coverage has highlighted existing issues, including timely access to mental and physical health care, average lengths of stay, participation in re-entry programs for incarcerated persons (IP), and rates of in-custody deaths. These issues and others remain important and continue to garner strong public interest.

The 2025/2026 San Diego County Civil Grand Jury (SDCCGJ) examined the county's detention facilities, as required by California State Penal Code 919(b): "The grand jury shall inquire into the condition and management of the public prisons with the county."¹ In 2022, the California Attorney General issued an opinion (No. 18-103) stating that the term "public prison" includes local detention facilities, and that a county or city jail is a common example of such a facility.

This report follows the Grand Jury's examination of San Diego's detention facilities, including a review of broad, system-level data, structural integrity, cleanliness, policies and procedures, and management at each site.

RECOMMENDATIONS for the San Diego Sheriff's Office:

Recommendation 1: Equip the medical wards of the San Diego County Sheriff's Office detention facilities with more capable life-saving equipment and medications like those used by 9-1-1 first responders to improve response to critical emergencies.

Recommendation 2: Identify and evaluate strategies, including a review of the existing March 7, 2022, San Diego County Law Enforcement Memorandum of Understanding, to implement required independent investigations by outside agencies into in-custody deaths that occur within detention facilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS for the San Diego County Probation Department:

Recommendation 3: Equip all San Diego County Probation Officers, especially those in juvenile detention facilities, with body-worn cameras and create policies and procedures for their use.

BACKGROUND

The California Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) establishes statewide standards for the construction, operation, and management of local detention facilities.

California Attorney General launched a civil rights investigation on May 14, 2025, into the San Diego County Office of Education and the condition of local juvenile detention centers.² According to The California Attorney General, Rob Bonta, the investigation highlights ongoing violations of the civil rights of those confined in the juvenile justice system. Therefore, the Grand Jury examined technology designed to increase transparency in interactions between sworn personnel and Incarcerated Persons (IP), thereby benefiting sworn staff.

The Grand Jury noted the difficulty of providing real-time medical care to a large population that may not have regularly seen a physician or psychiatrist. The challenges grow when converting aging detention facilities into hospital-like spaces, which often serve as de facto mental health centers. This key point was emphasized repeatedly during discussions with Commanders, Captains, and Administrators of the San Diego Sheriff's Office.

METHODOLOGY

The investigation combined a qualitative approach, including visual inspections, reviews of policy and procedure manuals, as well as interviews of sworn, professional, and medical personnel from various detention facilities overseeing both juvenile and adult detainees. It also included conversations with incarcerated individuals. Additionally, the Grand Jury sent a 62-question questionnaire to the San Diego County Sheriff's Office and the San Diego County Probation Department to better understand staff performance in daily operations and to gather general information that cannot be observed visually.

Site Tours

The Grand Jury visited seven adult detention facilities operated by the San Diego County Sheriff's Office and two juvenile detention facilities managed by the San Diego County Probation Department, as required. Upon arriving at each facility, the command staff provided the jurors with an overview before each tour. It offered an opportunity to ask questions during the tour and, in its conclusion, to discuss topics such as detecting contraband, booking procedures, prisoner classification, and job training. Throughout each detention site tour, the Grand Jury was granted access to all requested areas at each facility. The only exception was at the Youth Transition Campus. While touring the Youth Transition Campus, the Grand Jury wanted to observe an active classroom setting. The Grand Jury was told that students feel as though they are being paraded in public. Understanding this, the Grand Jury chose not to interrupt the classroom in session. Instead, the Grand Jury entered an unoccupied classroom. It is important to note that the Grand Jury did not visit any law enforcement holding facilities, such as municipal police department holding cells or temporary detention areas.

The Grand Jury noted the difficulty of providing real-time medical care to a large population that may not have regularly seen a physician or psychiatrist. The challenges grow when converting aging detention facilities into hospital-like spaces, which often serve as de facto mental health centers. This key point was emphasized repeatedly during discussions with Commanders, Captains, and Administrators of the San Diego Sheriff's Office. Additionally, the widespread addiction to alcohol and narcotics in this population not only increases health risks but also adds to the responsibilities of medical staff in detention facilities.

The San Diego County Sheriff's Office operates the seven adult detention facilities.

- San Diego Central Jail, located at 1173 Front Street, San Diego, CA 92101, opened in 1998 and was visited on October 3, 2025.
- Vista Detention Facility, located at 3255 Melrose Drive, Vista, CA 92081, opened in 1978, was expanded in 1989, and was visited on October 10, 2025.
- George F. Bailey Detention Facility, located at 446 Alta Road #5300, San Diego, CA 92158, opened in 1993 and was visited on October 24, 2025.
- Rock Mountain Detention Facility, located at 446 Alta Road #5400, San Diego, CA 92158, opened in 2023 and was visited on October 24, 2025.
- South Bay Detention Facility, located at 500 Third Avenue, Chula Vista, CA 91910, opened in 1982 and was visited on November 7, 2025.
- East Mesa Detention Facility, located at 446 Alta Road #5200, San Diego, CA 92158, opened in 1991 and was visited on November 21, 2025.
- Las Colinas Detention and Reentry Facility, located at 451 Riverview Parkway, Santee, CA 92071, opened in 2014 and was visited on December 5, 2025.

The San Diego County Probation Department operates two juvenile detention facilities.

- Youth Transition Campus, located at 2801 Meadow Lark Drive, San Diego, CA 92123, opened in 2022 and was visited on September 18, 2025.

- East Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility, located at 446 Alta Road #6100, San Diego, CA 92158, opened in 2004 and was visited on October 30, 2025.

Interviews

During this investigation, the Grand Jury interviewed personnel from various positions:

- Executive personnel, Sheriff's Office
- Executive medical personnel, Sheriff's Office
- Managerial personnel, Falck Mobile Health Corporation
- Managerial personnel, San Diego County Probation Department
- Managerial personnel, Office of Juvenile Court, and Community Schools
- Sworn personnel, San Diego County Probation Department Internal Affairs

Documents

The Grand Jury reviewed the following documents from the San Diego County Sheriff's Office and the San Diego County Probation Department:

- Board of State and Community Corrections, Title 15 Minimum Standards for Local Detention Facilities
- California State Auditor Report, dated February 3, 2022
- San Diego County Sheriff's Office Medical Services Division, Operations Manual
- MOU, dated March 7, 2022, titled "Countywide Protocol for the Investigation and Review of Officer-Involved Shootings and Other Deadly Force Incidents"
- San Diego County Detention Facility Strategic Framework Plan
- Citizens Law Enforcement Review Board, Investigation Workload & Classification Report, dated August 2025
- Board of State and Community Corrections, Title 15, Operational Standards for Adult and Juvenile Facilities (BSCC Title 15)

- Board of State and Community Corrections, Title 24, California Building Standards Code, for the modernization of detention facilities (BSCC Title 24)
- The San Diego Probation Department Policies and Procedures, about Institutional Service and Field Service
- California Public Safety Realignment Act (October 2011), known as AB 109
- California Proposition 47 (November 2014), known as the Safe Neighborhood and Schools Act
- California Proposition 36 (December 2024), known as the Homelessness, Drug Addiction, and Theft Reduction Act

Questionnaire

The Grand Jury provided questionnaires to the San Diego County Sheriff's Office and the San Diego County Probation Department, requesting them to complete and return the forms. The questionnaire requested general information that required authentication and command approval, such as budgeting, staffing levels, demographics, legislation affecting detention facilities, medical information, building conditions, ongoing refit projects, inmate programs, and food preparation.

Legislation

There are several pieces of statewide legislation and voter-approved propositions which are impactful to adult detention facilities and relevant to the scope of the Grand Jury's investigation:

- Before AB 109, enacted October 1, 2011, inmates sentenced to more than 365 days were sent to state prison. This rule no longer applies, and county detention facilities now house inmates serving longer sentences.³

- Proposition 47, enacted November 4, 2014, reclassified many low-level drug and property offenses from felonies to misdemeanors.⁴
- The recent legislation, despite fluctuations in daily incarceration numbers, Proposition 36, enacted December 18, 2024, has led to an increase in the number of incarcerated individuals compared to previous years, as the Grand Jury was briefed during facility tours. Proposition 36 changed California's approach to drug and theft crimes by introducing “wobbler” offenses, which allow certain crimes to be charged as either felonies or misdemeanors based on factors like criminal history.⁵ For instance, under Health and Safety Code 11395, possessing specific hard drugs (including fentanyl, heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine, and phencyclidine) with two previous drug-related convictions can be charged as a felony instead of a less severe offense, a misdemeanor.⁶
- Penal Code 666.1, enacted December 18, 2024, permits petty theft or shoplifting with two prior theft-related convictions to be charged as a wobbler. These amendments aim to enable more nuanced sentencing, reflecting each case's severity and criminal history.⁷

DISCUSSION

Adult Detention Facilities:

As of January 20, 2026, the Grand Jury determined from the questionnaire sent to the San Diego County Sheriff's Office that 4,229 incarcerated individuals were in custody. The San Diego County Sheriff's Office informed the Grand Jury that the maximum inmate capacity is 5,735; its adjusted capacity, based on usable beds, is 5,496. The questionnaire also indicated that as of January 23, 2026, the male inmate capacity was 3,682 and the female inmate capacity was 546.

In-Custody Deaths

The Grand Jury is aware of the number of in-custody deaths from previous years in this report, noting that it did not review any specific incidents. The investigation focused on operational procedures designed to reduce and eventually prevent in-custody deaths. According to the Auditor of the State of California, from 2006 to 2020, 185 inmates have died in San Diego County jails.⁸

The Grand Jury discovered that there have been fifty-nine in-custody deaths from 2021 to 2024. On average, this amounts to about fifteen deaths per year during this period. In 2025, ten in-custody deaths were reported in San Diego County Jails.⁹

The ten in-custody deaths reported in the San Diego County jails in 2025, as noted by the San Diego County Sheriff's Office, highlight the need for continued solutions that better support the overall welfare of our inmates and reduce the emotional suffering of family and friends already affected by having a loved one incarcerated. The Grand Jury began reviewing the procedures followed when San Diego Sheriff's Department Sworn or Non-Sworn personnel become aware of a medical life-saving emergency, especially when an inmate is found unresponsive. Currently, in-custody deaths that happen in a San Diego County detention facility are not included in the "Purpose and Scope" section of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), dated March 7, 2022. The MOU, titled "The Countywide Protocol for the Investigation and Review of Officer-Involved Shooting and Other Deadly Force Incidents," restricts investigations into in-custody deaths and specifies the circumstances under which criminal investigations and independent reviews are carried out for law enforcement-related incidents:¹⁰

- Discharges of a firearm, except those deemed unintentional, related to training, or conducted during the euthanizing of an animal
- Deadly force incidents that result in serious bodily injury or death
- This agreement applies solely to criminal investigations and does not address or impact on an agency's ability to conduct its own concurrent or subsequent investigation for administrative or civil litigation purposes

- This agreement is not intended to transfer investigative responsibility for all deaths occurring in a custodial setting. Deaths in a County Custodial setting will only be investigated in accordance with this agreement when they are the apparent result of the use of force by an officer, deputy, or custodial staff

Medical Equipment Used in 9-1-1 Medical Emergencies and Critical Incidents

Timely access to appropriate medical equipment and medication is crucial to improving survival and well-being for those who need lifesaving care. Detention facility medical staff have raised concerns about IP's welfare, citing short staff, inconsistent health checkups for individuals with existing health, substance abuse, or mental health issues in the Sheriff's custody.¹¹ Quick medical emergency response with the necessary equipment increases the likelihood of preventing loss of life.

The Grand Jury learned from the facility's medical staff and the Falck Mobile Health Service team that 9-1-1 First Responders use life-saving equipment that is more capable than the facility's equipment. Addressing these differences could help patients needing urgent care recover more effectively. It's important to emphasize that the concern is with the equipment, not the medical staff's commitment or performance.

Medical Emergencies

Data provided by the San Diego County Sheriff's Office indicates that San Diego classifies emergency responses into Levels 1, 2, and 3. Of these, Level One is the most critical. In such cases, fire engines with a paramedic and a paramedic ambulance, both equipped for advanced life support, are dispatched.¹² To assess these responses, the Grand Jury reviewed the complete equipment list, which includes an Electrocardiogram (EKG) machine, the LUCAS (Lund University Cardiopulmonary Assist System) device for automated cardiac compressions, IVs, catheters, and a drug box with over 30 medications addressing heart, respiratory, and pain needs, including narcotics.¹³ While

this core equipment is standard, additional items like a trauma bag, backboard, or extra narcotics are added depending on the type and severity of the call or injury.

The Grand Jury reviewed the questionnaire submitted by the San Diego Sheriff's Department regarding medical emergencies and critical incidents. The response clarified that 9-1-1 first responders bring specialized medical equipment to emergencies at detention facilities that is not available on-site during a critical medical situation. This equipment includes:

- LUCAS device¹⁴
- Cardiac Monitoring/Defibrillators¹⁵
- Advanced airway equipment maintains an open passage for airflow between the lungs and the environment, which is crucial for proper oxygenation and ventilation. The procedure involves evaluating the airway, positioning to optimize airflow, and securing it with devices such as oropharyngeal airways, endotracheal tubes, or laryngeal masks.¹⁶
- ACLS (Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support) drugs such as amiodarone, lidocaine, adenosine, atropine, magnesium sulfate, and dopamine, which can only be administered by certified healthcare professionals, such as a doctor, nurse, or paramedic who is trained in ACLS protocols¹⁷
- IV/IO access equipment that enables emergency vascular access when traditional IV lines are unavailable.¹⁸
- Paralytics, potent muscle relaxants used in critical care and surgery to induce temporary paralysis, are primarily used for endotracheal intubation, mechanical ventilation, and to prevent movement during procedures.¹⁹
- Vasopressors are critical care medications used to treat severe hypotension and shock by constricting blood vessels and increasing blood pressure to restore perfusion to vital organs. Primarily acting on adrenergic (alpha/beta) receptors, they are administered intravenously for conditions like sepsis, heart failure, and cardiac arrest.²⁰

In-Custody Death Investigations

The Grand Jury examined who is responsible for investigating in-custody deaths in San Diego County Detention Facilities. The Homicide Unit will investigate homicides and other cases as defined by Procedure Section 6.61 (Reviewed 11-18-25), which includes deaths of incarcerated people.²¹

San Diego County Medical Examiner

On January 9, 2026, the Grand Jury toured the San Diego County Medical Examiner's (ME) office. The Grand Jury was informed that the ME is responsible for conducting independent medicolegal death investigations, as outlined in Government Code 27491 and Health and Safety Code 102850.²² The medicolegal death investigations cover deaths that are sudden and unexpected, such as in-custody deaths.

The main goal of ME medicolegal investigations is to determine the medical cause and manner of death through autopsy. ME investigations are independent of law enforcement to provide unbiased analysis of incidents involving in-custody incidents. In contrast, law enforcement examines evidence that may result in legal culpability, such as criminal charges or policy or procedural issues.

The article "Strengthening the U.S. Medicolegal Death Investigation System" from the National Library of Medicine argues that medicolegal death investigations are crucial for both public health and the criminal justice system. Specifically, it points out that, for deaths in custody, certifiers may report a cause of death without identifying the underlying factors, such as whether the death was due to natural disease, drug toxicity, or other causes of restraints.²³ The Medical Examiner echoed this concern, explaining

that identifying the cause of death becomes difficult when resources are scarce, and conditions like excited delirium and positional asphyxia are possible. These issues underscore the urgent need for systemic improvements to ensure more accurate, transparent, and reliable medicolegal death investigations.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) dated March 7, 2022, revised the countywide protocol for investigating and reviewing officer-involved shootings and other deadly-force incidents.²⁴ Law enforcement agencies acknowledge the importance of more transparent and independent criminal investigations and reviews of all peace officer-involved shootings and use-of-force incidents resulting in death. Each law enforcement agency agreed to this MOU, including in-custody deaths that occur outside the jail setting. However, it does not apply to custodial deaths occurring inside a jail. Therefore, custodial deaths are not investigated by an outside agency, as specified in the MOU, which designates the San Diego Police Department as the Primary Investigating Agency.²⁵

A new county ordinance, approved by the San Diego County Board of Supervisors in October 2025 with a vote of 4-1, granted the Citizens Law Enforcement Review Board (CLERB) the authority to investigate health care providers involved with in-custody death issues.²⁶ This ordinance is intended to bring additional transparency and accountability to in-custody deaths.

Juvenile Detention Facilities

The Grand Jury visited the Youth Transition Campus and the East Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility.

East Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility:

The following information pertains to the East Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility. The Grand Jury did not receive data from the Youth Transition Campus.

The Grand Jury was informed through a questionnaire that it provided that the San Diego County Probation Department's total budgeted sworn staffing is 812, and its current sworn staffing is 769. The department's professional staff is allocated at 281, with current staffing at 95 on weekdays and 87 on weekends. The current ratio of sworn personnel per inmate is 1:8 during the day and 1:16 in the late evening.

The Grand Jury learned from the survey that the San Diego Probation Department Medical Service is provided through the Correctional Healthcare Partners (CHP).²⁷

The Grand Jury found through the questionnaire that when a youth submits a healthcare request, they must be seen within 72 hours. Youth can attend sick calls, which are held twice daily: in the morning and at night. Youth can also submit a mental health care request if they have mental health-related issues. The process is straightforward for both types of requests. Once the requests are collected, the nursing staff sorts them into medical and mental health categories. The Lead Mental Health Clinician, or their designee, triages mental health requests daily. The clinician classifies the requests as urgent or routine.

All urgent requests are handled within 24 hours, while routine requests are managed within 72 hours. Regardless of the request type, all are recorded on a tracking form and placed in the designated clinician's mailbox.

Closed Circuit Television Security and Body-Worn Cameras

The Grand Jury became aware of numerous allegations concerning civil rights abuses at the San Diego County Juvenile Detention Facilities: East Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility and Youth Transition Campus. The Union Tribune (UT) has reported on these concerns over the years. Additionally, the office of the California Attorney General

announced it was investigating both facilities for alleged civil rights violations.²⁸ The need for greater transparency and accountability persists, and incorporating modern technology into law-enforcement camera equipment would complement existing Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) systems. The Grand Jury noted the importance of allowing San Diego Probation Officers to record every interaction with youth, especially since sworn personnel were assaulted 13 times in 2025.

The San Diego County Probation Department employs Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) security systems in all juvenile detention facilities. These are listed in Section 05, Facility Operations, specifically 5.14.13, Closed Circuit Television Security System. Section 5.14.13.2 states that installation is justified to enhance security.²⁹

- Keep youth healthy and safe.
- Keep staff healthy and safe.
- Keep the work environment safe and secure.
- Protect officers from false accusations of misconduct.

The policy and procedure give general information. All cameras will be visible and not hidden.

- Designated facility areas will house live-feed monitors.
- A secure area will maintain the recorders.
- Each facility decides whether to retain the video.

The policy and procedure clearly outline the specific circumstances in which recorded video may be reviewed, providing defined criteria for permitted reviews:

- Review of an incident report.
- Review of allegations of staff misconduct.
- Review of youth conduct for potential criminal prosecution.

- Randomly check staff to make sure rules are followed.
- Additionally, authorized personnel in the chain of command may conduct random reviews at their discretion, provided they clearly document the reason for the review to ensure compliance with established review criteria.

The benefits of using Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) in San Diego County Probation Juvenile Detention facilities are clear and vital. However, depending on the camera angle, it might not capture the full or best view of the interaction between a San Diego County Probation Officer and a youth inmate because the view could be blocked. This is particularly true during close-up interactions. The use of body-worn cameras has helped fill in missing footage and enhanced accountability for law enforcement agencies using this technology.

The San Diego County Probation Department has guidelines outlining which uniform items, equipment, and control devices Probation Officers may use in juvenile detention facilities, as described in its policies on uniforms, radio equipment, and control devices.³⁰ Probation Officers have not been provided with this technology.

FACTS & FINDINGS

Fact: San Diego County Sheriff's Office detention facilities, historically, have had one of the highest in-custody death rates in the state of California.

Fact: The death of a person incarcerated in a county detention facility or jail is not covered by the purpose and scope of the MOU, "Countywide Protocol for the Investigations and Review of Officer-Involved Shootings and Other Deadly Force Incidents."

Fact: The detention facility's medical life-saving equipment is not as capable as the equipment brought by the Falck Mobile Health Service Team, 9-1-1 First Responders.

Finding 1: The current MOU requires that in-custody deaths in San Diego County detention facilities, except those resulting from use of force, be investigated separately by the Sheriff's Office, which determines legal responsibility. The Medical Examiner identifies medicolegal cause and manner of death.

Finding 2: The best chance of an overall successful recovery of an unresponsive Incarcerated Persons depends on both medical responders and facility medical personnel being equipped with the most appropriate medical equipment for all critical situations.

San Diego County Probation Department

Fact: The California Attorney General's Office has received many complaints about systemic failures, which have led to oversight issues at the East Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility and the Youth Transition Campus.

Fact: The San Diego County Probation Officers, who work in juvenile detention facilities, do not wear body-worn cameras.

Finding 3: The lack of body-worn cameras in San Diego County juvenile detention facilities is detrimental to an effective juvenile detention operation.

REQUIREMENTS AND INSTRUCTIONS

The California Penal Code §933(c) requires any public agency which the Grand Jury has reviewed, and about which it has issued a final report, to comment to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court on the findings and recommendations pertaining to matters under the control of the agency. Such comment shall be made *no later than 90 days* after the Grand Jury publishes its report (filed with the Clerk of the Court); except that in the case of a report containing findings and recommendations pertaining to a department or agency headed by an elected County official (e.g. District Attorney, Sheriff, etc.), such comment shall be made *within 60 days* to the Presiding Judge with an information copy sent to the Board of Supervisors. Furthermore, California Penal Code §933.05(a), (b), (c), details, as follows, the manner in which such comment(s) are to be made:

- (a) As to each grand jury finding, the responding person or entity shall indicate one of the following:
 - (1) The respondent agrees with the finding
 - (2) The respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding, in which case the response shall specify the portion of the finding that is disputed and shall include an explanation of the reasons therefor.
- (b) As to each grand jury recommendation, the responding person or entity shall report one of the following actions:
 - (1) The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action.
 - (2) The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a time frame for implementation.
 - (3) The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a time frame for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or head of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This time frame shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.
 - (4) The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation therefor. (c) If a finding or recommendation of the grand jury addresses budgetary or personnel matters of a county agency or department headed by an elected officer, both the agency or department head and the Board of Supervisors shall respond if requested by the grand jury, but the response of the Board of Supervisors shall address only those budgetary or personnel matters over which it has some decision-making authority. The response of the elected agency or department head shall address all aspects of the findings or recommendations affecting his or her agency or department.

Comments to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court in compliance with the Penal Code §933.05 are required from the:

RECOMMENDATIONS for the San Diego Sheriff's Office:

Recommendation 1: Equip the medical wards of the San Diego County Sheriff's Office detention facilities with more capable life-saving equipment and medications like those used by 9-1-1 first responders to improve response to critical emergencies.

Recommendation 2: Identify and evaluate strategies, including a review of the existing March 7, 2022, San Diego County Law Enforcement Memorandum of Understanding, to implement required independent investigations by outside agencies into in-custody deaths that occur within detention facilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS for the San Diego County Probation Department:

Recommendation 3: Equip all San Diego County Probation Officers, especially those in juvenile detention facilities, with body-worn cameras and create policies and procedures for their use.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

The following responses are required, pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05:

From the following organizations within 90 days:

- The San Diego County Sheriff's Office
- The San Diego County Probation Department

INVITED RESPONSES

Responses are invited from the following within 90 days:

- The Deputy Sheriffs' Association of San Diego County
- The San Diego County Probation Officers' Association
- The San Diego County Department of the Medical Examiner's Office

GLOSSARY

BSCC – California, Board of State and Community Corrections

CCHCS – California Correctional Health Care Services

CDCR – California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

CGJA – Civil Grand Jury Association of California

CLERB – Citizens' Law Enforcement Review Board

EMDF – East Mesa Detention Facility

EMJDF – East Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility

GBDF – George F. Bailey Detention Facility

LCDRF – Las Colinas Detention and Recovery Facility

MAT – Medication Assisted Treatment

MLDI - The medicolegal death investigation (MLDI) system investigates and certifies unnatural and unexplained deaths.³¹ Individuals responsible for determining cause and manner of death rely on thorough examinations, which may include autopsy, review of circumstances, analysis of medical records and test results, and evidence from the scene.

NaphCare - Delivers Healthcare Services and Solutions within Jails and Prisons to the IP - Incarcerated People

NCCHS – National Commission on Correctional Health Care

OB-GYN (obstetrician-gynecologist) is a doctor specializing in female reproductive health, combining pregnancy care (obstetrics) with care of the female reproductive system (gynecology)

PC – Penal Code

RMDF – Rock Mountain Detention Facility

SAMHSA – Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

SBDF – South Bay Detention Facility

SDCJ – San Diego Central Jail

SDSO – San Diego County Sheriff’s Office

SDCPD – San Diego County Probation Department

VDF – Vista Detention and Reentry Facility

Wobbler – A criminal offense that may be charged and punished as either a felony or a misdemeanor, depending on prosecutorial discretion, the defendant’s criminal history, and the specific circumstances of the case. Under California law, these offenses fall into two classifications, allowing a reduction to a misdemeanor.

YTC – Youth Transition Campus

DISCLAIMER

This report reflects the Grand Jury’s ongoing commitment to ensuring that county services operate transparently, efficiently, and in public interest.

This report reflects the findings and conclusions of the 2025–2026 San Diego County Civil Grand Jury based on the evidence, testimony, and documentation presented during the investigation. It is not a judicial determination and does not assign civil or criminal liability.

All information gathered from County departments, public agencies, and external sources was relied upon in good faith. The Jury does not independently audit financial records, validate operational data, or confirm the accuracy of third-party submissions unless specifically noted.

Nothing in this report should be interpreted as legal advice, policy direction, or an operational mandate. Recommendations represent the Jury’s assessment of opportunities for improvement, consistent with California Penal Code §§925–933.6. Implementation decisions rest solely with the appropriate public agencies.

Reports issued by the Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.

¹ "California Code, Penal Code - PEN § 919", FindLaw, Current as of January 01, 2025, <https://codes.findlaw.com/ca/penal-code/pen-sect-919/>

² Attorney General, Rob Bonta, “Attorney General Bonta Launches Civil Rights Investigation into Conditions at San Diego Juvenile Halls”, Press Release, State of California Department of Justice, May 13, 2025, <https://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/attorney-general-bonta-launches-civil-rights-investigation-conditions-san-diego>

³ Magnus Lofstrom, Brandon Martin, "Public Safety Realignment: Impacts So Far", Report, Public Institute Policy of California - PPIC, September 2015, <https://www.ppic.org/publication/public-safety-realignment-impacts-so-far/>

⁴ "Program Profile: The Impact of California’s Proposition 47 (The Reduced Penalties for Some Crimes Initiative) on Recidivism", National Institute of Justice - Crime Solutions, Posted on November 29, 2021, <https://crimesolutions.ojp.gov/ratedprograms/impact-californias-proposition-47-reduced-penalties-some-crimes-initiative-recidivism>

⁵ “PROP 36 - Understanding the New California Laws on Drug and Theft Offenses”, Office of The District Attorney - County of Riverside, December 23, 2024, [https://rivcoda.org/blog/prop36#:~:text=Proposition%2036%20%2D%20Understanding%20the%20New,\(Penal%20Code%20section%20666.1\).](https://rivcoda.org/blog/prop36#:~:text=Proposition%2036%20%2D%20Understanding%20the%20New,(Penal%20Code%20section%20666.1).)

⁶ "Health and Safety Code - HSC - ARTICLE 8. Treatment-Mandated Felony [11395- 11395.] (Article 8 added November 5, 2024, by initiative Proposition 36, Sec. 7.)", California Legislative Information, November 5, 2024, https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=11395.&lawCode=HSC

⁷ "Penal Code - PEN - 666.1 (Added November 5, 2024, by initiative Proposition 36, Sec. 9. Effective December 18, 2024. Approved in Proposition 36 at the November 5, 2024, election.)" California Legislative Information, November 5, 2024, https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=PEN§ionNum=666.1.

⁸ Acting California State Auditor, Michael S. Tilden, "San Diego County Sheriff's Department - It Has Failed to Adequately Prevent and Respond to the Deaths of Individuals in Its Custody", California State Auditor – Information Site, February 3, 2022, <https://information.auditor.ca.gov/reports/2021-109/index.html>

⁹ "Homicide, In-Custody Deaths, Officer Involved Shootings" San Diego County Sheriff Transparency Reports, Resources - Open Data, <https://www.sdsheriff.gov/resources/transparency-reports>

¹⁰ "Memorandum of Understanding-Countywide Protocol for the Investigation and Review of Officer-Involved Shootings and Other Deadly Force Incidents", sandiego.gov, March 7, 2022, https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/countywide_protocol_use_of_force_incidents.pdf

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¹² "Fire Department - Operations Manual - Fire Suppression: Medical Emergencies", City of San Diego, Effective 11/01/06, https://webdocs.sandiego.gov/sdfd-training/study-guides/captain/manuals/Operations_Manual/SI_02_Special_Response_Guidelines/SI_02_Section_09_Medical_Emergencies.pdf

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